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ABSTRACT

Major social science concepts that have an impact on a study of teacher education in developing nations are discussed. The relationship between national progress and teacher education is considered, and economic, political, and social realities facing these nations are pointed out. Among those discussed are: (1) economic problems of high population gains; (2) increasing demands for child labor; (3) the problem of school-age populations outstripping teacher education resources; (4) school involvement in training for rural development and improvement of production and the environment; (5) development of universal literacy and numeracy; (6) education as a social good; (7) social class values and attitudes; (8) social differences between the educated and the illiterate; and (9) national attitudes toward educating teachers. It is argued that American colleges and universities have a responsibility to produce teachers who are aware of the people and problems of the developing world, as well as a responsibility toward foreign students who come to the United States to study. (JD)

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DEVELOPING INTERNATIONAL UNDERSTANDING IN TEACHER EDUCATION

A Paper Presented to
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It is impossible to regard teacher education anywhere in the world as a single variable either for understanding or research investigation. Regardless of the reference, teacher education is a part of what westerners would call the social sciences, and no single perspective can account for its full understanding or national development.

The way in which we study or research teacher education in developed countries must give way to analyzing those problems that actually exist in less industrialized nations. Even in the developed world, teacher education has had its hypotheses and methodology challenged by international experiences. We have learned to treat with suspicion models which predicted numbers of teachers by a given year, or amount of literacy, or pupil-teacher ratios, especially if these were based on population statistics. There simply is no linear progression of development in teacher education or any other social discipline. And conditions have disproven emphatically any clear relationship between economic development and kind of national government or political stability.

Social scientists in the Third World are increasingly writing books on entire countries, and not just development sectors like education. These include studies on Burma, Nigeria, Ghana and Mexico. This is a definite change from conceiving how teacher education, for example, reflects what the state determines should be education policy, to how the country itself functions.

Moreover, the international debate about changes in investments away from physical capital (such as savings) to formal education are a

part of the broader policy shifts that affect teacher education. There are others such as whether a nation should emphasize mass literacy or functional school literacy; literacy or skill training; agriculture or industrial development; trade or social programs; industrial growth or environmental protection; and the list is endless.

In this paper, I propose to sketch a brief outline of some of the major social science concepts that impact on a study of teacher education in the developing world. I then plan to suggest some ideas for the development of international understanding in American teacher education.

I. TEACHER EDUCATION IN THE DEVELOPING WORLD

I believe that there are at least three major factors that govern an understanding of how teacher education relates to national progress: 1) economic realities; 2) political realities; and 3) social realities. I say "realities" to distinguish actual events and figures from the social science discipline itself.

1. Economic Realities in Teacher Education in the Developing World

It will come as no surprise that population increases weigh heavily in the determination of schooling and the production of teachers. The world's population is expected to be 8 billion by 2010, double what it was in 1975. This numerical increase brings about a proportionate rise in the number of dependents and school-aged children. Whether or not a country decides that all dependents will actually go to school (and thus provide teachers for them) is arguable. The crippling imbalance in sheer numbers of people and access to material resources is already making an impact, and is often resulting in a marked decline in quality on schooling. The increase in the demand for workers has already led in India to greater reliance on child labor, at least in the agricultural sector. Of course high birth rates also tend to cancel out other gains, such as increase in the quality of life, higher productivity gains, and place a greater burden on subsistence in relation to income.

A nation may have ambitions to maintain high quality in the programs for preparing teachers, but throughout the developing world is also faced with the practical realities of a school-aged population which outstrips the teacher education resources.

An example from the world's largest nation has shed some light on the relationship of population, as only one variable from the world of economic realities.

From available estimates, it is safe to assume that there is a severe shortage of secondary school teachers in the People's Republic of China. This situation has been described in reports from the Ministry of Education from 1956 onwards. But it is deducible from the closing of all institutions during the so-called Cultural Revolution from 1966 to the mid-1970's, and from the slow development of previous academic standards.

Mark Sidel now reports, however, that the examination model for gaining entrance to the University has returned, as one encouraging sign of the reinstatement of academic rather than political criteria for collegiate admission.

Even if the government of the PRC wanted expanded secondary school programs, it will take years before it can provide qualified teachers to staff them. Drawing personnel from other sectors, manufacturing technicians for example, to teach in secondary schools, will only in the long run increase demand in those sectors from which such personnel were borrowed.

2. Politics and Teacher Development

However, all educational programs are vulnerable to national political decisions. It follows then that the education and training of teachers is also dependent upon the type of schools proposed.

One of the major issues now debated is: should schools be directly involved with the world of work and rural community development, rather

than, say, as agents of literacy or numeracy. Or should the schools serve as agents for upward social mobility? We acknowledge that schools, by themselves, cannot be the sole agency responsible for improving the life of a community. Also needed are land reform measures, water control projects (such as drinking water, irrigation canals, etc.), health care and clinics, rural cooperatives, and a host of other projects. But one thing is clear: that the preparation and training (and retraining) of teachers is contingent upon the kinds of schools the government plans.

If we are addressing a rural community development school teacher, for example, we are considering a completely different kind of teacher from one commonly prepared in the developed world. We are in fact speaking of preparing teachers who are trained in practical work-related programs in the schools, programs which are essential to the development of local, community institutions: health, nutrition, agriculture, and crafts, for example.

The modern movement towards mass literacy is a direct result of the industrial revolution. The history of education, particularly in Europe prior to industrialization, has been quite different. From the time of Rousseau until the beginning of this century, schools always included craftsmanship and agriculture. One need only recall Pestalozzi, whose school was built around crafts development. One of Pestalozzi's colleagues, de Fellenburg, established agricultural schools. Lord Brougham in England set up an agricultural Poor School in Sussex in the 1820's and 1830's. And Froebel, with his primarily-based religious education program, nevertheless had afternoons of productive work scheduled for students out-of-doors.

But "manual training", a term which came to be associated with preparing technical workers for the factories, came to dominate schooling. These vocational schools often came to be known as "industrial schools" in the colonies.

But in the latter part of the nineteenth century there was a revival of crafts and agriculture. In England, Ruskin and Morris sought to restore the traditional craftsmen, even then beginning to disappear in the 1880's. Their program was known as the Fellowship of the New Life, and in their schools manual work was part of the educational experience. This movement influenced Gandhi, ther studying in England, who exported it to South Africa where he founded the Tolstoi Farm, his school built around the work-study model of Ruskin and Morris.

In the United States, it was the work of Samual Armstrong, who established the Hampton Institute; Booker T. Washington, who built Tuskegee; and George Washington Carver, the famous agricultural scientist. These men were all Black and they furthered the cause of agriculture in higher education. Despite its opposition in the United States, this model of educating people for agricultural production, gained international recognition particularly in England at the turn of this century. The Hampton-Tuskegee model influenced the schooling practices of colonial governors, especially in Kenya, but also throughout Africa, where the model was strictly adopted. Booker T. Washington's book, "Working With the Hands" became the principal inspiration for trade studies among African students for over 50 years.

"The idea that ordinary rural primary school teachers could play an important role as...leaders in rural development activities...has been taken seriously by many governments and aid agencies concerned

with education in developing countries," writes Jon Lauglo. He finds in an historical analysis, however, little to support the ambitious concept that teachers double up as extension agents or model farmers while also maintaining proficiency in their conventional school teaching.

The question Lauglo poses is whether or not teachers should concentrate on their traditional role of transmitting schooling knowledge in the usual school subjects, or whether they should widen that traditional understanding of a teacher also to include specific development needs, particularly in agriculture and crafts.

In Jamaica, Jennings-Wray reports that a successful agricultural education school was in existence 40 years but was closed because of political constraints. He points out that education is always vulnerable in the hands of politicians, and makes the telling observation that education in agriculture is simply not viewed by parents as a higher status education or occupation.

> "In spite of all the rhetoric about the value of agricultural education, programmes for the development of the economics of the Third World countries, the reality is that the students and their parents do not see agriculture as a subject to be studied by anyone with ambition."

What inhibits the development of such programs in developing countries is precisely what hinders them in developed countries--the negative attitudes society has of practically oriented curricula.

3. Social Realities and Teacher Education in the Developing World

As I have noted, it is hard to escape the conclusion that in the developing world, education is not necessarily as highly prized a social good as it is in industrialized countries, and that the value one places on, say, literacy is a more important good than that which an individual places on, say, religion or subsistence.

Social class values and attitudes and the social differences between the educated and the illiterate are also determinants.

There are obviously still efforts by the upper and middle classes in some countries to keep members of the lower classes illiterate and in menial and servile roles. Whether or not the children of the lower classes receive any education at all is still politically sensitive in many parts of the world. The difference between urban and rural schools in this context is often used as a convenient tool for analysis, but is not very reliable for assessing the depth of social class differences.

Still another feature is religious differences. Where there are sizeable minorities within national borders, or a large enough percentage of the total national population with many different kinds of minorities, the educational program may closely parallel religious instruction if that is permitted. This is not just true in places like Africa, Asia and elsewhere in the developing world. It is also true in places like the United States, where local school control and regionally dominant religious groups often dictate policy.

It may be one of the ironies of formal education, as spread throughout the world by colonial systems, that the process of formal schooling did in fact help weaken the informal apprenticeship programs that many countries now seek to rediscover in rural community education programs.

But apart from the economic and political realities, does schooling as a social reality make any difference at all? Even if we concede that schooling and preparing teachers will be of greater benefit for the nation that just preparing machinists for the factories, do teacher effects make a positive contribution to student achievement?

4. Teacher Effects on Students' Academic Achievement

Do school characteristics and teacher quality make a positive contribution to student achievement? Social science researchers have argued successfully that the inequalities in schooling are the result, not of schooling practices in themselves, but the result of societal inequalities. The research of Coleman, Jencks in the United States, Bowles and Gintis in England, and now Saha in Australia have pointed out that schooling differences lie chiefly in the fundamental character of society. Bowles & Gintis, for example, have argued that the major determinant of schooling achievement is in the structure of property in economic life, and that schools and teachers operate to reinforce these differences.

The policy implications for education in the developing world becomes: if teachers and schools don't result in improving schooling performance, what does? Stated economically, is a national investment in the training of teachers the most efficient allocation of scarce resources?

Saha, however, has concluded that, unlike conditions in the developed world, that trained teachers do make a difference in the developing world especially for more difficult subjects and at more advanced grades. Avalos and Haddad report similar findings from their reviews of teacher effectiveness in Africa, India, Latin America, the Middle East, Malaysia, The Phillipines and Thailand. Saha notes that "resistance to schooling represents a reassertion of traditional values and attitudes in the face of the non-traditional and, in this example, Western cultural and institutional penetration."

The point here is that in many less developed countries there are already low home background effects, and high teacher effects... the reverse of the condition in developed nations. However, the danger is that increasing the quality of teachers may have the same effect as replacing traditional values.

II. DEVELOPING INTERNATIONAL UNDERSTANDING IN AMERICAN TEACHER EDUCATION

American teacher understanding and awareness of actual conditions in the developing world is appallingly minimal. Most of the popular views held are simplistic and naive.

The purpose of this part of the paper is to argue that American colleges and universities have a vital and responsible role to play in educating prospective teachers--but also their other clients and constituents--about the people and problems of this planet.

It is my contention that the expansion, reform, and redesign of curriculum for teachers should include a component on international and comparative education, promoted by other social and behavioral science departments. This presumes, however, that selected teacher educators become knowledgeable in such affairs. This should be a total institutional effort, not just one in teacher education.

The approaches are numerous. Let me suggest a few for consideration.

Curriculum

1. The Design of Standard Subjects.

Most courses and plans of study in general and humanistic studies are western-oriented. Few courses and fewer programs have concepts, approaches, or cultural norms drawn from different parts of the world. The majority of the world now lives in Asia, Africa and South America. What do today's graduates know about such places? It is imperative to begin the process of infusing non-western ideas and studies into post-secondary (and secondary) curricula from a multicultural perspective.

2. Comparative Approaches

A study of other cultures, nations, and ways of life are only a beginning step in the development of consciousness about the social revolution taking place in the world. The social and behavioral sciences, for example, are still very much concerned with local and national problems. The use of international data could widen a student's understanding of the application of a concept or principle. The process of modernization (as opposed to religious orthodoxy, for example, as both Iran and China come to mind), urbanization, the impact of technology, religious conflicts--are a few of the fruitful examples for both teaching and research applications.

3. Theme Approaches

Few global problems are simple in understanding or resolution... certainly not war or peace, energy, population, food and hunger, pollution, religion and faith...to name a few. Curricular reforms may be vital in undergraduate education to allow team approaches more freedom. The organization of a higher education institution may actually be counter-productive to curriculum development when problems of personnel, money and facilities emerge. Joint faculty appointments, inter-departmental teaching assignments, coordination of resources, such as the library which serves the whole institution, are a few examples of what can be done.

4. Area and Civilization Studies

How did a nation of 1 billion people, one-quarter of the earth's population, learn to feed itself when most of Asia and Africa have not?

What does a country of 8000 years of continuous civilization have to offer a nation with only 200? What do Americans know about India, the nation with nineteen percent of the earth's population? (China and India together have 40 percent.) What country, in Asia, ninety percent Muslim, is the world's fifth largest in population, just behind the United States?

The reasons that Americans, by and large, do not know the answers to these important questions is because schools and teachers have not required them to know such information. Such national ignorance has not gone unnoticed throughout the rest of the world, however. But what are the inevitable consequences of such gaps in secondary and post-secondary institutional programs? The answer is the propagation of citizens illiterate in global affairs.

Major area and civilization studies, such as China, Japan, India, Islam, might be examples of interdisciplinary offerings. Such studies an cut across academic bureaucratic boundaries and stimulate more productive teaching and research.

The difficulties of such ambitious enterprises are in teaching, research and in maintaining qualified faculty in a variety of disciplines: languages, politics, economics, literature and the humanities, and the social and behavioral sciences. A well-stacked library is also essential in such areas.

But the advantages of international area studies are equally compelling and manifold. A few include:

* the development of international teaching materials
* faculty exchanges
* study abroad programs for longer terms, consistent with in-depth area analysis
* expanded contact with foreign governments and agencies and sister institutions
* citizenship education programs for international understanding among community leaders

Expanded, coordinated and interdisciplinary courses and studies do not necessarily mean the addition of a few courses or modules of instruction (although that is beneficial where none exist), but rather a refinement in the scope of the curricular offerings. We can readily appreciate the importance of learning a spoken language other than our vernacular. But that alone gives us only the medium for communication in another culture. It does not teach us in itself that culture, nation, or ethnic group.

Technical Assistance

Another way higher education can participate in international understanding is in programs of technical assistance. The industrialized nations, particularly the United States, Europe and Japan, have an enormous moral as well as economic stake to assist in the development of poorer nations. International lending institutions, such as the World Bank, these days perform herculean tasks maintaining the fragile economic balance of some countries between solvency and default. The increase in population in developing nations literally eats up the marginal increase in resources, so that whatever savings are accumulated are quickly spent to feed more mouths, provide more health care, build more schools.

Students attending higher education institutions today will have to address these same issues in their professional and occupational lives. It makes eminent good sense for any institution which professes to provide for a general, humane, liberal education (and which especially trains teachers) to expose its students to the present problems beyond its geographic horizons mankind faces on this fragile planet.

If such institutions can relate directly to problems indigenous to Third World nations--in food production, natural resources management, health care, education, to name a few--they can enhance their own credibility, and correspondingly increase global understanding. National pride, institutional respect, and professional strength are all at stake as colleges and universities struggle with educating and providing technical assistance to nations in need.

Educating Foreign Students

What should the role of higher education be in educating and training students from foreign countries? In 1980 there were 300,000 foreign students in the United States, and that number will double by 1990 comprising then 10 percent of all higher education students. Thirty-seven percent of all engineering Ph.D.'s went to foreign nationals in 1981. Thirty percent of all foreign students came from member nations of the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC)--Nigeria, Venezuela and Saudi Arabia, among others. The number from Asia is on the increase.

One thing is clear from this unmistakeable trend, that the United States has become the higher education mecca for the world. Many developing countries do not have a sufficient number of facilities to

accommodate all their students, and the ones that do exist are not always adequately staffed or equipped. But it is equally apparent that many institutions tolerate foreign students, not just because of the cultural diversity they bring to a campus, but because they are an additional source of revenue, both to the school and the local commercial community. This is especially true in technical and scientific graduate programs.

If colleges and universities do not make the transition in curriculum emphasis, foreign students themselves may help bring about the needed reform by advocating change based on their experiences and needs.

The degree to which higher education assumes an international orientation is less a function of its resources and facilities. Still less is it the character or numerical strength of its student population. It is a measure of its academic and instructional leadership.

Nearly half of all higher education institutions in the United States have centers or institutes for international education. Nearly all have large numbers of foreign students, especially in graduate programs. Many have grants and contracts with foreign nations for research, development and training activities, and more and more faculty are gaining first-hand experiences in the developing world.

Higher education cannot allow itself to commit the errors of educational superficiality, of failing to educate through knowledge and inquiry. A comprehensive higher education institution, regardless of its founded and funded mission, can ignore global developments only by compromising its learning objectives. Our survival and civilization may depend on educating tomorrow's citizens about today's world.

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